

simpler than they are. He strove to interpret every aspect of the world by direct observation. Philosophy was only another name for the truths and lessons of science. He found the key in the fact of motion. His friend Harvey discovered the motion of blood, Galileo the motion of the stars. Thought was motion in the brain. The material world was the only world. The task of the philosopher was to explain the universe in mechanical terms. Never was there a system of more undiluted materialism. Even God is a corporeal spirit. The world consisted of natural and political bodies. He resolved to set forth his teaching in three treatises, *De Corpore*, *De Homine*, *De Cive*, man forming the connecting link between nature and society. Leslie Stephen salutes him as a Herbert Spencer of the seventeenth century.

That the encyclopaedic project was not carried out in the intended sequence was due to the constitutional crisis which he found on his return from abroad in 1637. The most urgent task was to express his thoughts on man and society, leaving the study of nature for quieter time. He associated with the group of lawyers, poets, and divines who gathered round Falkland at Great Tew, near Oxford, and who live for ever in the portrait gallery of Clarendon. At the ripe age of fifty-two he made his first contribution to the political debate. The little work entitled *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*, though not written for publication, circulated freely in manuscript before it was printed in 1650, and was a good deal discussed. The Dedication to his friend the Earl of Newcastle, a Cavendish and a Privy Councillor, dated May 1640, boldly declares the book to be the true and only foundation of the science of politics. "It would be an incomparable benefit to Commonwealth that every one held the opinion

concerning
law and policy here declared/' Previous writers
from antiquity downwards, he adds with a
contemptuous sweep of
his hand, had not understood the subject. It
reminds us of
Melbourne's saying that he wished he was as
sure of anything
as Macaulay was of everything.

The book consists of two parts. *Human Nature,*
or the Fundamental Elements of Policy was written as an
introduction
to the longer and more important treatise on
the state.
Beginning with a brief survey - of our faculties
of body and
mind, Hobbes reaches the heart of his subject
in the chapter
on " Good and Evil." Man is not wicked, but he
is instinctively selfish, acting solely for his own good.